

LRA's LOUGHTON LIFE Townwide Edition

*The newsletter of
Loughton Residents Association
March 2012*



Dealing with problems

LRA Cllrs do a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes dealing with residents' problems. For example, County Cllr Chris Pond noticed the bus stop at The Uplands had been closed during Church Hill building works. He contacted TfL and it was reinstated within a day. He also noticed swathes of mud on the road and contacted the District Council, upon which proper wheel washing and a mobile sweeper were used by contractors within 48 hours.

Cllr David Wixley in Roding Ward has followed up concerns about fly-tipping, and after a long saga, double yellow lines have been painted at the corner of Greensted Road, Valley Hill and other roads for the safety of pedestrians, including children from White Bridge School.

Pressure from St Mary's Cllr Lucette Howe has led to permanent road repairs, including Tycehurst Hill where all potholes were permanently repaired in November.

After another long battle, Cllr Ken Angold-Stephens has succeeded in getting a gate put into the fence between Cheltenham Gardens and Roding Gardens to provide access for cleaning staff to remove rubbish. He has also persuaded the District Council to replace the seats in the bus shelters and to routinely clean the rubbish that accumulates in the station precinct which attracts rats.

Anyone for tennis?

The tennis courts on the Roding Valley recreation ground have been completely refurbished and each court is now separated from each other. One area is now a multi-games area. The outdoor gym nearby is proving to be extremely popular. There are also long-term plans to refurbish the football changing rooms.

May elections

LRA will be putting forward candidates for the re-election at the Town and District Council elections on 3 May. We hope for your support on the day and need people who would be prepared to talk to residents on LRA's behalf in the run-up. To help, call 020 8508 4457 or email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk.

Many people assume they are automatically on the electoral register because they pay council tax or they have voted before. This is not the case - you need to register every year. To check, call 01992 564411 or email elections@eppingforestdc.gov.uk. To register, print off a registration form at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk.

12 MARCH 2012 PUBLIC MEETING & AGM LOUGHTON BLUE PLAQUES

Town and County Cllr Chris Pond will talk about the people on Loughton's blue plaques.

Doors open 7.45pm for 8pm start at Loughton Cricket Clubhouse. Entrance is in The Uplands (off Church Hill), where the road bends sharply. Parking onsite and nearby. Talk to be followed by refreshments and LRA's AGM.

Please support LRA

Join LRA now – Only £5 per household until end-2012. You will get extra newsletters and can opt to receive our weekly email local news bulletin. Members' support for our work is vital as subscriptions pay our costs, such as printing newsletters and election expenses. To join, see the back page. (Subscriptions for existing members are due each January).

**Could you help LRA further improve Loughton?
See above**

Planning & licensing matters

The LRA Plans Group looks at all planning and licensing applications in Loughton. It consults residents and supports, or objects to, individual applications as appropriate. For some current cases, see our website.

Grass verge next to boundary with Oaklands: Vodafone and O2 have appealed against the District Council's refusal to allow a telecomms mast.

Other masts: The Council turned down five other telecomms mast applications from Vodafone and O2. Revised proposals are now under discussion and this approach is welcomed as the companies could just have appealed.

Highways changes, Chigwell Lane: The Plans Group objected to a number of points in respect of the proposed highway widening and other improvements along Chigwell Lane, which are associated with the planning application for a retail park in Langston Road.

Shops by Sainsbury's, Torrington Avenue: The District Council has approved the demolition of the shops, and the number of car-parking spaces will increase from 26 to 44. LRA Cllr Jennie Hart has been in touch with Sainsbury's to ensure spaces are used by shoppers and not commuters.

Loughton BBQ, 171 High Road: Despite objections from local residents and LRA Plans Group, the District Council has granted an application for a 30-minute extension to closing times on Fridays and Saturdays (till 2.30am).

District Council Nursery site, Pyrles Lane: The District Council is considering the possibility of housing on this site, between the houses on Hillyfields and Pyrles Lane and the green area running down to Rectory Lane. It has already received a petition opposing the proposals from Pyrles Lane residents. The Plans Group will be looking closely at this when a formal application appears.

Roding Valley High School: The school has dropped plans for high external fencing and has applied for new pedestrian gates onto Alderton Hill and security fencing inside the site.

Loughton Golf Club, Clay's Lane: The District Council has approved a change of use of part of the clubhouse to a restaurant for both golfers and non-golfers. The Plans Group objected because Clay's Lane is a narrow green lane already subject to too much traffic.



Ceremony to mark the plaque to Sir Hugh Cairns, pioneer neurosurgeon, who campaigned for the crash helmet, at Woodcroft school, 22 January 2012.

Blue plaques

One of the distinctive features of Loughton is the installation of blue plaques to commemorate where notable people once lived. This was an LRA initiative of the 1990s, and there are now 33 plaques. Being outside London, Loughton is not within the English Heritage plaque scheme, but has had a large number of famous people, mostly because it was a pleasant place to live (and LRA works to keep it so). LRA Town and County Cllr Chris Pond, who was in on the original decision to start the Town Council plaque scheme in 1996, will be giving a talk at LRA's AGM (see front page for details).

Council Tax benefit

Currently those with low incomes (or on Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance) may be eligible for this benefit. The Government is proposing to transfer responsibility for paying the benefit to local councils, but will only pay 90% of the cost. Councils would be expected to pass the loss onto claimants or make it up themselves. The rules would not allow any benefit reductions for pensioners and possibly some long-term disabled, so it would be those of working age and low-paid or those out of work who would have to pay more. In Epping Forest this could be up to £750 per year per person or, if the council, and hence local council tax payers, meet the cost it could be £1m.

Loughton Festival

The 2012 Loughton Festival will start on 10 March. There is over a month of arts, culture and heritage events on offer. Sue Taylor is looking for volunteers for a range of tasks. Please contact her on 020 8508 2512 or visit www.loughtonfestival.org.uk.

**For more information about LRA & Loughton please visit
www.loughtonresidents.co.uk**

Parking sagas

The parking review in Epping is at last nearing completion. It will be followed by the Buckhurst Hill scheme and finally Loughton Broadway. It is taking far too long with further slippage indicating that the Broadway will not be started before 2013. LRA remains angry about the slow progress and will continue to keep up the pressure.

On a more positive note, LRA has succeeded in getting jockey rails installed in Torrington Drive to protect the verges. The scheme to install parking bays in a number of roads around Debden is proceeding on time and on budget.

On and off street parking is being taken over in November by a new organisation, North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP). It is claimed that this will be a more cost-effective service but LRA will be monitoring it very closely, particularly in relation to parking charges. LRA County Cllr Chris Pond has formally asked the NEPP to consult residents about entirely new parking schemes for streets off the High Road, where residents are finding fewer spaces as shop workers and commuters use them.

Town Council benefits

LRA campaigned long and hard in its early days for the formation of a Town Council in Loughton. Epping and Waltham Abbey had one, but Loughton did not, an unintended consequence of the amalgamation and non-replacement of the old Loughton UDC in 1933. In its 16 years, the Loughton Town Council (LTC) has proved itself to be a well-run and influential body, unlike in Buckhurst Hill, where the council has been damaged by political party infighting. LTC were one of the first Quality Councils in the country, and has always kept the LTC part of the Council Tax low, especially since LRA first held a majority (which we hope to maintain or increase it at this year's elections).

Town Councils (TC) do not, unfortunately, have vast powers, but they have much influence. One of the activities of the TC is to look at EVERY planning application in the town. A group of seven Cllrs meet every other Monday, and go through them in much more detail than District Cllrs ever get to do. Without the TC there would be no Christmas lights, no flower baskets in our high streets, no football or free tennis courts, no multi-use ball court there, or no outdoor gym. Loughton would still exist but it'd be a duller and less interesting place.



Debden open spaces

Many thanks to all those people who gave evidence to LTC in 2008 on the use of the Debden and other greens for informal sports and games. This was as a result of LRA responding to and halting a decision by Conservative portfolio holder Dave Stellan to put forward some of these greens for housing.

Over the last 3 years there have been developments that mean LRA may be able to protect the greens in other ways than through the restrictive village green registration. The LRA-led TC has successfully protected Hillyfields open space by having it designated as a Queen Elizabeth II playing field. For the others, the new Localism Act gives the possibility of making them into community open spaces, while the new Local Plan that the District Council is now having to devise means they may be protectable through that process, too. LRA Cllrs are investigating every avenue to ensure Debden's fine open spaces remain open.

Council Tax freeze

The Town, District, and County Councils have all frozen Council Tax for 2 years in a row with a minimal effect on services. However, while the County and District have received 2.5% a year from the Government for doing so, LTC has not, so has had to finance the freeze itself. The LRA controlled TC has tried to do this sensitively and has actually increased services. Parking charges have also been frozen to help local businesses and shoppers.

The Government is imposing further savings over the next 2 years and achieving them will be much more of a challenge. In particular the localisation of council tax benefit, which may adversely affect the poorest people in our town (see opposite). LRA has supported the proposals so far but will be monitoring the balance between Council Tax and the possible effect on services, as well as the benefit situation next year. Epping Forest has the second lowest Council Tax in Essex and LRA encourages the administration to keep it as low as possible while maintaining services.

**For more information about LRA & Loughton please visit
www.loughtonresidents.co.uk**

Get more from LRA!

Every year, LRA volunteers deliver two editions of *Loughton Life* to all homes in Loughton. LRA members get extra newsletters and can also receive our weekly email local news.

JOIN LRA NOW by posting this form to: LRA Membership Secretary, 14 The Hawthorns, Loughton, IG10 3QT. There's a standing order form on our website.

I enclose £5 till end-2012 £5
 I enclose a donation for LRA's work£.....
 Name
 Address
 Postcode IG10..... Phone
 Email (if any)

I would like LRA's weekly email local news bulletin
All membership information is held by LRA for its own purposes and is not made available to any other body.

Want to help?

If you would like to help LRA by becoming a local councillor, getting involved in what we do, or by spending an hour occasionally delivering newsletters near where you live, please contact David Linnell or Chris Pond (phone numbers below or email contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk).

LRA who's who

ALL ENQUIRIES: contact@loughtonresidents.co.uk 8508 2932
 PRESS OFFICER Michael Benbow 8508 4457
 MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY Juliet Pollard
 14 The Hawthorns IG10 3QT 8502 0552
 INFORMATION CO-ORDINATOR Ian Allsop 8532 0053
 SECRETARY Stephen Pewsey 8508 5582
 MINUTES SEC. Imogen Lawrence 8508 9570
 TREASURER Miriam Murphy 01992 530221

COMMITTEE
 Jack Benjamin 8508 4765
 Rebecca Fricker 8508 8369
 Leon Girling 8418 0076
 Barry Johnston 8508 0843
 Kevin Latchford 8502 4568
 Tasha Lattimore 07949 826891
 David Linnell 8508 2932
 Ann Obeney 8502 3604
 Bela Yorke 8508 4729

LRA COUNCILLORS
 (D = District Council; T = Town Council)
COUNTY: Loughton (Central)

Chris Pond 7 Staples Rd 8508 2361

ALDERTON WARD
 Rose Brookes (D&T) 3 Lower Park Road 8502 5981
 Lance Leonard (D) 25 The Lindens 8502 0771

Monthly farmers' market

LRA organises the farmers' markets on the first Sunday of each month (9am-2pm) on Centric Parade, Loughton High Rd. Come and meet local Cllrs and LRA helpers. LRA has two stands at all markets available free for charities and other local voluntary organisations. Spaces are available from September onwards. The wintry conditions on Sunday 5 February meant that LRA was not able to be there. However, a few brave traders did make it and were very pleased to see the residents who came to shop.

Annual town meeting

The Town Council's Annual Town Meeting will be held at Murray Hall on Wednesday 14 March 2012. Doors will be open from 7.30pm to allow residents to view displays by local organisations, while the formal meeting will commence at 8pm with guest speaker Dr Kamal Bishai, representing the West Essex National Health Service, talking about forthcoming changes to provision of healthcare services. Free refreshments will be served.

BROADWAY WARD
 Jennie Hart (D) 74 Queens Road 8508 3661
 Katie Nicholson (T) 07904 069998
FAIRMEAD WARD
 Tessa Cochrane (D) 16 Shaftesbury 8508 4148
 Carol Davies (T) 13 Colebrook Gardens 8508 4234
 David Wixley (D) 2 Copper Beech Court, Goldings Road 8418 9284
FOREST WARD
 Jill Angold-Stephens (T) 89 Lower Park Road 8281 0674
 Colin Finn (D) 16 Church Close 8508 5577
 Suzanne Harper (T) 23 Algers Road 8508 4770
 Peter House (T) 52 Baldwins Hill 8532 1275
RODING WARD
 Ken Angold-Stephens (D&T) 89 Lower Park Road 8281 0674
 Margaret Chalk (T) 49 Southview Road 8508 2226
 David Wixley (T) 2 Copper Beech Court, Goldings Road 8418 9284
ST JOHN'S WARD
 John Markham (D) 77 Queens Road 8508 1945
 Stephen Pewsey (T) 59 Wroths Path 8508 5582
 Caroline Pond (D&T) 7 Staples Road 8508 2361
 Chris Pond (T) 7 Staples Road 8508 2361
ST MARY'S WARD
 Richard Cohen (D) 61 Traps Hill 8502 3242
 Chris Harper (T) 23 Algers Road 8508 4770
 Lucette Howe (T) 19 Sparelease Hill 8508 3719
 Tracey Thomas (T) 110 Grosvenor Drive 07508 193187

Issue 255 © LRA 2012 Newsletter compilers: Ian Allsop, David Linnell, Gerarda Cashman.
 Promoted by and on behalf of Independent Loughton Residents Association of 20 Eleven Acre Rise Loughton IG10 1AN.
 Printed by Sema Printing Co Ltd. 81 Grove Road, London, E17 9BU.

**LRA's Farmers' Markets, High Rd,
 first Sunday each month**